

THIRD REPORT

OF A

COMMITTEE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES

OF

New York Yearly Meeting of Friends

UPON THE

CONDITION AND WANTS

OF THE

COLORED REFUGEES.

1864.

*At the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in New York in 1864—Sitting  
of Second day afternoon, 30th of Fifth month :*

THE report of the Committee on Colored Refugees, now presented by the Representative Meeting, is of a deeply interesting and affecting character, showing that the work is one of great magnitude, and the signs of the times give evidence that this work is increasing largely. Thousands of the poor liberated negroes are flocking to our borders, and the prospect is that, destitute as they are of almost everything, many of them having scarcely a rag to cover their nakedness, the suffering will be very great.

The subject was again confided to the Representative Meeting, with instructions to give diligent attention to the service, and report the result of their labors next year.

WILLIAM WOOD, *Clerk.*

## REPORT.

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IN reporting to the Representative Meeting our proceedings during the past year, we feel there is cause of gratitude to our Heavenly Father that we have been enabled to labor together in harmony for the aid and relief of the objects of this concern.

The liberality of Friends has been the means of mitigating much suffering, and causing much thankfulness and many prayers that blessings may be poured upon the heads of the kind donors.

At our first meeting we were cheered by a letter of sympathy from our brethren in England, through our friend, Josiah Forster of London, containing a draft for one hundred pounds sterling, which was soon followed by a similar token of interest from Friends in Ireland, with a draft for twenty pounds sterling; and during the year we have received further remittances, amounting together to seven hundred and ten pounds, which realized in our currency the sum of \$5,163.09.

Accounts soon came to us of large numbers of colored people escaping from slavery in very destitute circumstances; little clothing having been supplied by the masters during the past year, and in some instances for a longer period, the calls for help were very urgent. On first reaching a place of refuge, all need help; and when they arrived by companies of from three hundred to seven hundred or more, as they often did, the calls upon the store of supplies within reach were very urgent and exhausting.

The following incidents, related by a correspondent, serve both to illustrate the love of liberty in the minds of this oppressed people and to touch our hearts with sympathy on their behalf:

"Sandy Dorsey, after having escaped from slavery, sought refuge at Point Lookout, Md., and was improperly returned by an officer to his former master; but the love of liberty having been roused, it could not be suppressed; and though chained and fettered, he found means again to effect his escape, and reached the quarters of our correspondent, who writes: 'As he entered my room, wearied and exhausted, he sank down and cried. He lifted his pants, and I beheld shackles with a chain attached. He had been chained to a tree two days and nights, and when his claimant left him to be gone some hours, aided by a pair of pincers, he succeeded in breaking one end of the chain, tied it to his knee, and covered his ankles with his pantaloons. In this condition he made his way to us. Some soldiers from the hospital soon came in, and two hours' faithful filing put the shackles in my hand. I now have them, and at a future day your society shall behold them.'

"Another case was that of Charlotte Bennet, a young girl about fourteen years of age, who was returned to her master by Captain R——. She again made her escape, and had been two days in the woods in the neighborhood of Point Lookout without any food or shelter. She was met by some of the nurses from the camp, who were walking beyond the lines; but not being able to get her past the guard, they were obliged to leave her without assistance. That evening a soldier nurse, himself feeble and far advanced in consumption, but true to the claims of human suffering, called on our correspondent and asked the loan of a cloak. He was of the party who saw Charlotte in their walk, and the sad expression of the child's face moved him. He was reminded that it was a blustering night, that the wind and the waves were howling fearfully, and that it might cost him his exhausted life to venture out on such an errand. 'I'll give it, then,' was his reply. 'All I ask is, that you will leave your door ajar, as it may be midnight before you hear my voice.' About eleven o'clock there was a gentle tap at the door, and when opened the poor girl entered, and the soldier returned to his ward. Her first words were: 'Oh! Missus, give me something to eat.' After eating moderately, she wrapped herself in an old blanket and was soon asleep. On waking she was washed and dressed in some of our Meeting-house garments, which fitted as if made to order. She worked faithfully for two weeks, when she was sent to a family near Baltimore, where she gives great satisfaction."

Communications such as these stimulated our efforts, and the Committee felt it their duty to keep an open ear to complaints of oppression or arbitrary treatment from these people, and, as far as possible, to seek the proper remedy. For this object a sub-Committee was appointed to have a conference with the

American Freedman's Enquiry Commission in regard to their protection. Subjects were brought to the notice of the Commissioners which appeared to need care, and they expressed themselves obliged by the attention of Friends, and promised their efforts to have certain abuses redressed as far as possible. Latterly it has been observed that the conduct of one official, at least, has been much less the subject of complaint than previously.

In Ninth month two members of our Committee visited the Refugee Camp at Washington, and then proceeded to Alexandria, where they were greatly encouraged by the evidence they saw of industry and thrift of many who had arrived but a few months previous in destitution and rags. There were then about five thousand Colored Refugees at that place; and the total number of daily rations then issued by the Government was only three hundred and fifty. This was a reduction of eight hundred and fifty in three months, and showed that a large number were supporting themselves. There was a great desire amongst them to have homes of their own, and several hundred small frame-houses had been erected within four months, at a cost of from thirty-nine to three hundred dollars each. They had a school in active operation in a house erected with a legacy left by General Washington for educational purposes. This was visited with much interest; the attendance was large, and fully occupied two teachers. The progress made by the children was very satisfactory. The writing in copy-books was excellent, considering the short time they had been under instruction, and brought to light much latent talent that needed cultivation and opportunity to develop itself.

Our agent, Harriet Jacobs, appeared to be very diligent in her labors for the benefit of these people, but it was evident she needed assistance. Since that time the Committee have engaged the services of her daughter, Louisa Jacobs, to assist her; and the reports of their united labors continue to be satisfactory.

It is estimated that not less than forty thousand dollars have been expended by these refugees from slavery in providing themselves homes, which proves that, however much help they may need in the hour of their extreme distress, they *do* appreciate the blessings of liberty and homes of their own.

One interesting feature of the management of our agent here

is, that whilst supplies are promptly given to the sick, the aged and infirm, or the newly arrived who have no means of their own, those who are able are required to pay according to their ability. Thus a spirit of independence is encouraged, and a portion of the funds is returned to us, to be used again for the benefit of others. We have received from Alexandria during the past year a little over \$1,735.00 for goods thus purchased by the Colored Refugees.

The following extract from a letter of Harriet Jacobs will be read with interest. Writing on Fourth month 9th, she says:

"I must tell you about the old woman who is attracting much attention here. A few days ago all the civilians were sent in from the front. Among them was an old woman one hundred and ten years old. She was taken to my rooms, where the aged women are kept. They received her with open arms, and overwhelm 'baby sister,' as they call her, with kindness. She retains her memory remarkably, and talks sensibly. She has none of the plantation-negro idiom. She cannot see to recognise persons, but can distinguish daylight from dark. She has had three masters; one of them, Major Lang, belonged to General Washington's Staff. She takes great pride in telling how she spun cloth for the soldiers' clothes during the Revolutionary War, hoping when the war was over she would receive her freedom. She worked with a light heart, never dreaming the day of deliverance was so far in the future. After the breaking out of the present war her master carried off all his able-bodied slaves, and left her and two other old women to die. She said when the people were leaving Brandy Station: 'I thought I should be left to starve, but the Lord had prepared this place, and I knew nothing about it.' She was carried on a bed to Alexandria by those who were seeking refuge in that place."

In another letter she writes respecting the new school carried on in a building erected by the Refugees:

"I am sorry to see that hard work is wearing sadly on the teachers. The doctor says my daughter will have to give up; but her heart is in the work. More teachers are needed, but we have no accommodations for them. The rations they give colored teachers amount to very little, and it would take every dollar of their pay to board them. When the school opened there was a debt of one hundred and eighty dollars on the building. I did not like to beg the money, so wrote to some friends in New England and begged some of the articles left after their Fair.

Mrs. M. T. and Mrs. E. sent us the articles. We had a pretty table and the Freed-people were much gratified. We cleared one hundred and fifty dollars, which was paid towards the debt."

Louisa Jacobs writes, Fifth month, 14th, 1864:

"We have two hundred and seventy-five scholars' names on the roll; daily attendance, one hundred and sixty. My labors here are very encouraging—in the school they are hard. While the children are eager to learn, and many make astonishing progress, the duty of maintaining proper discipline is by no means easy. Of course great allowance is to be made for them. Wholly unaccustomed to the system of a school-room, they find no lesson so difficult as the necessity of keeping quiet. I am inclined to believe their organization more restless than that of white children, the love of fun and mischief runs so warmly through their veins."

Lucy Chase, whose long experience as a teacher among the Refugees at Norfolk entitles her judgment to great respect, writes of the labors of the teachers as follows:

"Even if confined to teaching alone, they are extremely arduous and very exhausting. Let no one come who has not great strength. We are much worn and wearied with ceaseless labors."

In Tenth month, 1863, our friend, Wm. H. Burgess, who had been drafted for a soldier and was released, offered his services to labor amongst the Refugees, which were promptly accepted, and he proceeded to Yorktown and applied himself faithfully to the work. He was supplied with clothing, shoes, leather and shoemakers' tools, school-books, Bibles, Testaments, etc.

In Eleventh month the Committee issued an address to our Monthly Meetings and Friends generally on behalf of the Colored Refugees. Seven hundred and fifty copies were printed and mailed to our various correspondents.

About that time it was believed that a special visit to the hospitals and camps of Refugees at Washington, Alexandria, Norfolk, Yorktown, etc., would be of service, and our friends James Congdon, Benjamin Tatham, and John J. Thomas, were appointed for that service. They report as follows:

"The undersigned Committee, appointed to visit the colored camps and to inspect the condition of the Colored Refugees in

the vicinity of Washington, Alexandria, Fort Monroe, Norfolk, and Yorktown, report :

"That we visited those places in Eleventh and Twelfth months last, and found the general condition of the people as favorable as could be expected under the circumstances, being a very great improvement in their condition since the visit of a similar committee the previous year.

"In Washington, the colored camp contained about seven hundred inmates, consisting of women and children, and aged or invalid men, the whole being the residue of about 15,000 who had been in the camp since it was first formed, and most of them had found employment elsewhere. There was an excellent hospital here, in which the patients appeared to be well cared for.

"There was a colored camp at Arlington Heights, favorably arranged in some respects, but very much the reverse in others. The people were much dissatisfied with the Superintendent, D. B. Nichols.

"In Alexandria the general condition of the colored people in the new barracks was favorable, but some of the dwellings were extremely wretched. There were many serious complaints against the Superintendent, Gladwin, who appeared to the Committee very unsuitable for the position he occupied. Harsh and tyrannical to the people under his charge, but fawning and obsequious to those in authority, he appeared to the Committee undeserving of confidence, and, as a Government employé, discreditable to his employers.

"Many of the Refugees had built small dwellings for themselves, and they appeared in a prosperous condition. We found complaints of considerable arrears of wages due to some of the people, and represented the facts to the authorities. They have since been paid, either in whole or in part, we believe in consequence of these representations. The Committee were well satisfied with our agent, Harriet Jacobs, at Alexandria, and also with her daughter, Louisa Jacobs, who was employed as a teacher of the Refugees.

"From Washington we proceeded to Fort Monroe, Yorktown, and Norfolk. The district north of the James river was under the charge of Capt. C. B. Wilder. Many of the Refugees were employed upon abandoned farms within ten miles of Fort Mon-



roe, some in cutting timber, and others in various ways. They appeared to be in a prosperous condition.

"At Yorktown there were several thousands of these people. The chief settlement was about a mile from the Fort, and consisted of about four hundred huts built by themselves. It was called Slabtown. There was another settlement about a mile beyond, upon a farm, where each occupant of a hut had an acre of land allotted to him for cultivation. A school-house and dwelling had been built and nearly completed at Slabtown, and several Friends (amongst whom was our agent, Wm. H. Burgess) were engaged in making preparations for conducting an extensive school. Most of these people were supported on Government rations.

"From Yorktown we returned to Fort Monroe and proceeded to Norfolk. Here also many of these people were employed upon abandoned farms. Many more were employed in Norfolk and vicinity. The district under Capt. Brown, south of the James river, contained about 20,000 colored people. About 3,000 colored children were receiving education in several of the public schools in Norfolk formerly used for white children, but abandoned on the occupation of the place by the national forces. We visited these schools, and were very favorably impressed with their condition and management. They were taught by a number of intelligent young women from different parts of the Northern and Eastern States, most of whom were sent here by the American Missionary Society; and were under the superintendence of Professor Woodbury, the agent of that society here.

"We were politely received by all Government officers whom we had occasion to see, especially by General Butler, who, in the midst of pressing engagements, promptly granted an interview and full opportunity for expression of views, and furnished the necessary passes for the districts we desired to visit.

"In conclusion, we would add that, in going from place to place, we became fully convinced of the utmost importance of selecting men of the strictest integrity for superintendents, because upon them, in a large degree, depend the happiness and improvement of these people. Can we expect to witness the

desired improvement under superintendents who are unkind, tyrannical, and, it may be, dishonest ?

“ JAMES CONGDON.

“ JOHN J. THOMAS.

“ BENJAMIN TATHAM.”

On Second month 20th, 1864, William H. Burgess wrote as follows :

“ The books sent from New York are of very great service in my school, but the school is more than twice as large as I expected ; more than one hundred scholars, and all wanting spelling-books. I did not have near enough of that kind. I have a great abundance of readers, and I think they will be needed soon ; I have had more than one hundred calls to *buy* spelling-books ; some ask for New York spellers and some for Comly's spellers. I sold to those able to buy, and gave to the poorest. From my observation, they study better from a book they have bought than in one given to them ; and I have seen them spend their money for things much less useful. I will need about two hundred spelling-books, two Bible dictionaries, and one hundred cheap Testaments. I have vaccinated all who have applied to me, 400 or 500, perhaps—100 in one day. I have found stripes from the masters' lash on some ; on one woman's arm I counted six stripes, one of them four inches long and three-quarters of an inch wide ; on her back were fifty-four scars from two to seven inches in length. She suffers very much from rheumatism.”

On Second month 28th, 1864, he writes again, acknowledging receipt of a quantity of goods, and says :

“ There is a man living near the new village who has the name of being a very good shoemaker, but is not able to procure tools and leather. I think of setting him to work with the tools and leather sent. My object is to have a place where I can send poor people to get their shoes and boots mended. I hope to make it self-sustaining, but cannot tell certainly until the experiment is tried.”

Further experience demonstrated the importance of some more suitable arrangement for supplying useful goods to those who, though not able to pay the high prices charged in the districts under military control, yet were able to pay *something* for them ; and it became evident that gratuitous distribution to

such was a serious injury. We quote from a letter from Wm. H. Burgess, dated Yorktown, Third month 6th, 1864 :

"I am satisfied that at present the greatest good can be done for the colored people by selling goods at low rates. Both here and at Norfolk goods are sold at about twice the ordinary prices. Colored Refugees in the best circumstances are not able to buy what they really need, and many are not able to buy any at all, and so have to beg or do without. I have given some clothing without pay, but only in such cases as I knew required it."

It was thus represented by those laboring among the Refugees, that the establishment of stores in suitable locations, for the sale of useful goods at low prices, would be the most effectual mode of assisting many of them. Diligent inquiry was made in regard to it, and careful consideration given to the subject. Wm. H. Burgess was directed to leave Yorktown under the exclusive care of our Philadelphia Friends, and, in conjunction with the authorities of Norfolk, to select a suitable place and open a store for this object. A building upon Dozier Farm, eight miles from Norfolk, was selected, and a small stock of goods sent to him. It was opened on 4th month 28th, 1864, and in the first three days \$250 were received. It is situated in the midst of a number of farms cultivated by colored people, of whom there are within a short distance more than sixteen hundred, most of whom have some small means to buy with.

This being accomplished, the authorities then requested that a similar store might be opened in Norfolk, where there were, early in this month, ten thousand Refugees. After careful inquiry, the Committee agreed to the proposition; and arrangements are in progress to that end. The two stores can be conducted with less proportional stock and labor than one alone. The Committee have engaged the services of our friend, Joseph T. Macumber of Vermont, to coöperate with Wm. H. Burgess; and have also engaged a capable colored man to assist them.

The opening of these stores, it is believed, will be of great service to the objects of our concern. In Norfolk, our friend Lucy Chase and her coadjutors will attend chiefly to the charitable distributions; and Wm. H. Burgess and J. T. Macumber to the stores.

On Fifth month 4th, 1864, Lucy Chase writes as follows :

" I will very gladly accept the suggestion that the charity wants should be met by me. My impatient desire to have a store opened in town, I rejoice to know, will soon be realized. I have made myself acquainted with the wardrobes of nearly all the Refugees under the care of Government in Norfolk, and give only to meet a need. To the laboring poor I give necessities, but I expect them to make some return. I do not, of course, give or sell to Norfolk or Portsmouth colored people ; when they leave the reception camp, they pass into a field too large for one person to superintend. The new-comers (sick and destitute) receive most of the articles sent here ; they are hurried upon farms from sanitary and industrial considerations ; and once there, are less needy and destitute than they would be if they remained crowded and idle in the city."

In answer to inquiries made, the following was received from Wm. H. Burgess, dated Norfolk, First month 2d, 1864 :

" It is supposed there are 7,000 contrabands in Norfolk and vicinity. About 6,000 receive full or partial support ; besides whom, there are about 4,000 in the vicinity of Norfolk and Portsmouth, on farms. They till about 5000 acres ; the Government and the cultivators divide the crops, each one half. There are schools on some of the farms. Suffering is, of course, comparative ; were I in their condition, I should be suffering. The wants of new-comers are the most decided in clothing and bedding. They are remarkably healthy ; prevalent disease—chills and fever. More teachers, of the right stamp, are needed. The Refugees live in any kind of houses that they can get ; they build log and frame cottages, 12 by 15 ; accommodating 6 or 12 persons. Twenty-four farms are cultivated in the vicinity of Norfolk, to be increased to thirty. The abstraction of able-bodied labor will render farm operations difficult next summer, especially unless timely supplies of seeds, implements, etc., are received. The Freedman is exactly as might be expected, a strange compound of religion and immorality, of faith and suspicion, industry and idleness, natural quickness and ignorance. As a laborer, he may be educated to become valuable to his family and country, and fit to make his way anywhere. They will do poorly if left to themselves ; as small landowners, they will waste time and labor in accomplishing little things."

A letter from Horace James, Superintendent of Blacks at Newbern, N. C., dated November 7th, 1863, was received, from which we extract as follows :

"The small-pox is raging among the colored people, and they have other sickness in hospital, and need hospital clothing and bedding. We want a hundred blankets, and a quantity of hospital gowns for convalescents to wear before they put on their own clothing; also pants to go with them."

On Twelfth month 2d, 1863, the Committee shipped to their relief thirty pairs of blankets, which were acknowledged as follows:

"NEWBERN, Dec. 12, 1863.

"I thankfully acknowledge the receipt of thirty pairs of blankets from the Refugee Committee of Friends of New York, for the relief of the suffering people from and in the small-pox tents. In answer to an urgent application from the surgeon-in-charge, I put ten pairs at once into the small-pox hospital; the others I am distributing to those who are discharged with the loss of everything. May God speed you in your work of helping to raise these long oppressed people who are struggling along into the new life of self-dependence!"

In First month 1864, we were advised by our friend Martha R. Leeds, of Flushing, L. I., residing temporarily at Nashville, Tenn., of great destitution in that city. That there were there at that time ten thousand colored people, seven thousand of whom were in a suffering condition, and four thousand bearing painful privations. The authorities and residents of that city were not disposed to assist them, and many were dying of want. She stated there were several persons sent there from Ohio, who were doing all they could to help them; but they had not the means. Our Committee sent to these persons, through the Cincinnati associations, twenty cases of clothing, containing 166½ garments, and a case of useful dry goods to the value of \$519.96. These arrived very opportunely, and alleviated much suffering. Supplies from the West following on quickly, we felt ourselves relieved from the need of sending again.

The many thousands in Tennessee and down the Mississippi escaping from slavery, must constantly need vast resources.

In First month last, two members of this Committee visited Washington and Alexandria, and inquired into the condition of the Refugees in those places. One of the Committee, upon informing the Secretary of War of some alleged abuses at Arlington Heights, was promptly requested to investigate these charges in order to the application of a sufficient remedy.

This was acceded to, and a commission was issued for the purpose on the 12th of First month, appointing that Friend in conjunction with a Friend of Baltimore, "Special Inspectors, to inspect the condition of the colored camp at Arlington Heights, and to investigate the management thereof and the treatment of the inmates of said camp by the officers having them in charge."

This engagement occupied between two and three weeks.

The object of this camp, as explained by the chief officer in charge, is to give protection, instruction, and employment to the Colored Refugees—profitable both to themselves and to the Government. The rate of remuneration is less than can be had outside the camp, in order to induce them to seek employment elsewhere and become self-supporting.

At the time of the investigation, the camp contained six hundred and fifty inmates, of all ages and both sexes; most of them at that time were provided for in comfortable frame houses; but about one-third were quartered in miserable tents, and were in a deplorable condition. There was a store-house, well supplied with blankets and articles of clothing, used by the people. There was a work-room for the accommodation of about fifty women engaged in making up garments. A large school was kept by the agents of the "American Tract Society." There was a building nearly completed for the reception of the aged and infirm, called "The Home," and there was also a building designed for a hospital, but not occupied for that purpose.

The colored people, generally, complained of their treatment by the Superintendent as harsh, negligent, and cruel; some of them had been barbarously treated; and there was a general feeling of dissatisfaction, under the belief that they had not been paid the full amount of their wages.

Our friends report that this camp had not been cared for and managed as the public had been led to suppose by an apparently authorized report, which was published in Twelfth month last, and reprinted in the "Friends' Review" on the 2d of First month of this year. With this report in their hands during the investigation, the inspectors failed to discover in it any of the essential elements of truth; and its effect was to excite in their minds painful suspicions of the motive which induced its publication.

The immediate effect of the investigation appears to have

been beneficial. All parties, not excepting those complained of, acknowledged that it was timely, and would be productive of good. The following paragraph of the Report of our friends may not be out of place here, and will be read with interest :

“It is gratifying to report the remarkable energy which has been displayed since our first visit to the camp in erecting the new houses. Within the short space of three weeks thirty of these houses, forming one hundred and twenty distinct dwellings of two rooms each, have been nearly completed, and others are in progress. The inmates of the old tents have been removed to these comfortable dwellings, and the whole camp wears a different aspect. ‘The Home’ has been opened ; and the old and feeble have been comfortably provided for. The hospital was also opened with thirty-two beds within ten days after our first visit, and received patients. This has been a great relief ; and a number who were suffering in misery have passed away their last hours in comparative comfort.”

Subscriptions from within the limits of our Quarterly Meetings have been received to the amount of \$9792.34. From New England, etc., \$640.25. From Great Britain, £710 sterling, which realized in our currency \$5769.09. From sales of goods, \$3128.98, as per Treasurer’s report.

Clothing has been received, as near as we could ascertain, amounting to 11,775 garments, besides about 7500 made up in New York and Brooklyn from goods purchased by this Committee.

There have been also a considerable quantity of shoes sent us from New England, as well as from our own members, which have been very useful ; also books, clothing, and many other desirable articles. Many persons, not of our Society, have aided in the work by subscribing liberally to our means of helping the needy. These, we hope, will accept the assurance that we have endeavored faithfully to perform the trust reposed in us.

From letters and information recently received, we suppose the number of destitute and suffering Colored Refugees will be much larger for the coming year than the past ; and the Christian heart only need be informed of the great distress and suffering, to insure a befitting response.

Amongst all the sorrow and afflicting circumstances that abound in the land, it is some consolation that we have lived to see so many bonds broken, and the oppressed set free.

The following information and extracts from letters will be read with interest.

Mary Forster Collins, a member of New York Monthly Meeting, offered her services gratuitously to assist in any way that would benefit the Colored Refugees, and to go where she could be of the most service. Her offer was accepted, and Norfolk decided upon as a suitable place.

About the commencement of this year she joined the little band of devoted laborers in that city. We extract from her letters as follows :

"One hundred slaves had just arrived ; we went to see them ; whole families from a plantation on the river went in a body on board the boat and came off. They were blissful ; one woman beautiful and very smart. I cannot in writing give you any idea of these sights.

"In a severe snow-storm one thousand arrived with only the poor clothes on their backs ; their utter poverty is terrible. Nine hundred came yesterday, all ragged ; their masters had not given them clothes, some for a year, others two years. All beg for Bibles.

"You would smile to see me standing on the platform and talking to over one hundred little black faces. It is as much as I can do to bring myself to sufficiently simple language. They are such infants in the powers of thinking, and those are what we try to cultivate. They learn easily by mere imitation, but seem to find it difficult to think, and never ask that Yankee child's question, 'Why?'

"With some new-comers were fifty-four from one plantation—a very fine set and very intelligent. The next morning some ladies went to teach them. In the midst of their eagerness to learn, a man appeared at the door, and they all flew to him, hugging and almost smothering him. One woman came to the ladies, and said, 'Please excuse us, Missus, but he is from de nex plantation and just escaped, and we so glad to see him safe!' It seems three men had tried to escape, and were handcuffed to be sent to Richmond for safe keeping ; but even then he had succeeded in getting away. It is so every day—something showing the real joy of these people at their liberty.

"We paid a visit to an old colored woman one hundred years old ; she told stories of the Revolution. She had belonged to seven families, and now she was left all alone, and not a single child to attend to her. The people here attend to her wants, but they are strangers to her.



Poor old creature, it was very sad to hear her stories of how she had been given away to pay a debt, and her children sold. One master was kind, another cruel, and so it went on. All her recollections of her youth were very vivid. She looked like a mummy, so shrivelled; and although her eyes were open, she was blind. They had never let any of her people read the Bible, and she wanted so to hear it; she quoted a good deal."

Fourth month 7th, she writes :

"In the morning, at a Sabbath-school, think of me in the midst of fourteen grown men, some of them grey-headed, and me their teacher; men who probably know twice as much in some respects as I do. But we had a deeply interesting lesson; only a very few could read at all. I had all the reading and talking to myself. It is a perfect relief to teach grown people and have no thought of order, but to see each one listening with devout attention, ready to receive everything we have to give them. I was blessed that day with a great many good thoughts that I found words for. I felt honored by them when I left, and they said with one voice: 'Wish we may have you to teach us next Sabbath.'"

A letter from Lucy Chase, dated Norfolk, First month 7th, 1864, states :

"Over two thousand negroes have come to Norfolk in less than two months. I do wish I could get a thousand pairs of shoes; the need of them is immense. The want of everything like clothing is alarming."

In another letter she writes :

"The large evening-school for adults continues to be popular and interesting. Mother, child, and grandchild sometimes go hand in hand to the school-room. As late as nine o'clock, some of the zealous ones turn from their work and join the multitude with open books. Large numbers of men and women sit nightly around writing-desks, and 'stumble along right smart' with pens and ink. The stimulating motive with most of the adults is a fervent desire to read the Bible; and the reverent gratitude and childlike purity of expression in their earnest faces seem to typify a befitting inspiration. It would be worth a journey from the North to see the brilliant picture of the evening-school. The young, enthusiastic, and noble-spirited women, who in large numbers are workers in this field, gather at night for the good work. But superabounding faith is needed to buoy up patience in

any effort expended upon the masses. The negro came out from slavery so stained with cunning and deceit, that even the natural spontaneous expressions of his gentle and affectionate nature are veiled with vice. Freedom already promises to do wonders for him. Merit is stimulated by recognition; and those who know the worth of their new gift strive, while giving thanks therefor, to make themselves worthy of it."

Sarah Smith, a Minister, and member of Indiana Yearly Meeting, formerly of Sheffield, England, had, with her husband and others, been laboring some time among the Refugees near Vicksburg when that locality was attacked by the rebels. An Orphan Asylum they had established was disturbed, and one of the inmates—a bright little boy—was taken away by them. They took nearly forty other negroes, and with them two white men, one a doctor and the other a lessee of a plantation; these two white men they shot, after having cut off the ears of one of them. This induced such a feeling of unsettlement, that it was deemed unsafe for Friends to remain there. Of a meeting with the Refugees before leaving, Sarah Smith writes as follows:

"Such earnest petitions that God would go with us; that the 'blessed seed sown might bring forth fruit to de glory of de Lord; that the Lord would send back dese dear teachers to teach the children de way to Jesus; that de Lord would bless de pastor and spare his life to labor a little more; de Lord gib him more grace, more faith, more power to preach the Word, to convert de unconverted, and make dem living members of de Church of Christ.' The power and unction with which this was delivered, must be felt to be understood. One of our dear teachers repeated the first verse of the hymn: 'Oh, say, will you be there?' and said: 'I have thought whilst sitting here, if we should never meet again on earth, and that last day arrives when the saved ones shall stand around the Throne, will you be there? shall I be there?' When she took her seat, one spontaneous burst of weeping was heard, and soon we bade farewell."

Of a meeting held at another place they visited, she writes:

"As I spake, the room was filled to suffocation; and the poor things became very noisy in their expressions of approval. Many of their countenances beamed with heavenly delight. Their minister then

arose, and said : ‘Brederen and sisters, we have had de blessed gospel preached dis day. We neber had de gospel in de South ; it was all, “Obey your masters ;” and dey neber told us Jesus died for poor black man. Now, dis lady say, Jesus died for black and white ; and we feel Him here (putting his hand to his breast), and we knows it is de gospel ; for Jesus tell me he wash my sins away. I was de greater sinner man on de plantation, and Jesus touch my heart, and I tried to pray. I called for mercy. My master heard me, and said he hab no praying niggers on his plantation ; told de oberseer to give me five hundred lashes, but he could not whip de pray out of me. Den he send me to de jail, in de dark cell ; but my blessed Jesus made it light—send de morning star to light my cell, and I sing glory to His name.’ One prayed : ‘O Lord ! you dät promised to be wid de two or tree gathered in your name, and have been at de beginning of dis meeting, won’t you, dear Master, Lord, be wid it to de end ? You know I cannot read in de blessed Book ; but you will help me to bring dis congregation to the bleeding Saviour.’ ”

In another letter she says :

“Three hundred and fifty Refugees were placed in a few unfinished huts. It had rained the night before, and there they sat on a few wet, dirty rags, in the most extreme wretchedness ; yet not one would say they wished themselves back. The reply to this question was : ‘No, missus, I neber wants to go dere any more ; I’s tried dat, and knows we can’t be any wos. Den, look dere at my children ! dere’s two of dem got books, and dey neber get dat in slavery. Don’t you tink you willing to suffer, if your children get free ? ’ ”

From Wm. H. Burgess, dated Norfolk, Fifth month 10th, 1864 :

“The Freedmen have now to think and act for themselves in their new position. All their lives, thus far, they have had to obey the commands of their masters, and received most cruel treatment for disobedience.

“When I was vaccinating the colored people at Yorktown, I discovered, on the arm of an aged woman, enormous scars, some three-quarters of an inch wide and four inches in length ; and a young woman, who took charge of her, assured me there were more than one hundred such scars on her body—some more than a foot in length. I do not understand how mortal flesh can endure such cruelty, and it does not endure it unaided. Scores have been whipped until they tainted away, and even died, as a punishment for mere trifles. They

come to us with these sad stories, the truth of which we cannot doubt, and ask for help : 'My chil'en were sol' an' took South ; we was willing to do any kind of work, but we requires help at dis time.' These were the words of a very good old man who visited me when I was sick, and voluntarily took it upon himself to sit up with me at night. He was intelligent enough to understand the marks on the thermometer, and kept the room at a suitable temperature. This he did without any assurance of reward, and, when compensated, expressed his thanks as for a gift. The cruel severity with which many have been treated renders them unfit for hard labor of any kind. If some suitable employment was furnished for such, they could easily maintain themselves and those depending upon them. Making shoes, brooms, braiding hats and bonnets, tending factories, etc., will be good employment for them. But, until this employment is furnished, the wants of this class must be supplied by *charity*. In nearly every case where Refugees have come within our lines, they are almost destitute, and must be supplied before they are fit to be employed. It is true : 'We requires help at dis time.'

"It is the prospect that five thousand of these people will come to us for aid in a short time, and there will most certainly be a great demand on the benevolence of the North. If this demand can be met, it is important that it should be done in time. It will not do to wait until the stories of suffering have reached the North before we prepare to relieve it. It is only necessary to consider the sufferings of the Refugees last fall and winter, and know that the same event will follow the same cause again, only to a greater extent, and therefore more fearful, to form a conception of the wants to be supplied. There is suffering here now ; and, speaking of probabilities, we may safely multiply it a thousand times. The authorities have been preparing quarters for those who are expected here, but can provide for only 3,000 ; what the remainder are to do I cannot tell.

"This morning I visited the Court-House at Ferry Point (opposite the city), where are thirty white refugees from Plymouth. In one room were three families, fourteen in number. In the centre was a bench, on which lay the corpse of a little boy, perhaps ten years old, who had just died from exposure and fatigue. On a pallet lay another little boy, who I judged was dying. The father and mother were too tired and worn to pay due attention to their children, and too destitute to afford a shroud. I do not know where the colored people from Plymouth have resorted, but it is most likely we shall witness such scenes among them very soon. While we think that the able freedmen who have been here some time need little more than that necessary articles be placed within their reach, we know that those who have lately come in

are unable to supply themselves in scarcely any particular. This will more than likely be the case with all. The colored people are universally pleased with the store already established, and are very anxious that there shall be one in this city. Different farm superintendents report to us that we are doing great good, and I may add that we are perfectly satisfied with our success."

Captain C. B. Wilder, writing from Fortress Monroe under date of February 29th, 1864, says:

"The work of preparing an enslaved race for liberty and freedom is second only in importance to the work of liberating it. The children of Israel were forty years at school in the wilderness before they were put upon the work of self-support; and, as the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, just so truly does the elevation of this long degraded people depend upon the helping hand and moral influence brought to bear upon them by the friends of humanity, as they emerge from darkness to light and citizenship.

"It is a sad mistake to suppose that all they need is to be set at liberty, without the fostering help of friends. The developments of the last two years prove this most unmistakably. Where friends inculcate the virtues needed by teaching, preaching, and living among them in the practice of all they teach, there is steady progress perceptible almost daily. The family relation is established and honored, the Sabbath is kept as never before by them, and almost all the other vices and crimes disappear, or are practised only by those unreached by those influences. Hence the wonderful difference in classes and camps where these reforming influences are or are not wanting.

"While the army is breaking in pieces Satan's instrumentality of degradation, the army of Christ should be erecting the structure of freedom in the hearts and lives of the people, so that the influence of education and the Gospel of the Son of God, shall ere long restore them in the scale of being to their true position among the families of the earth.

"As God is working out the overthrow of slavery, He is, I truly believe, calling upon the humane and Christian of every name to take care of the victims, and give them 'aid and comfort.' And to none more loudly does He call than to the 'Friends,' whose means and sympathies are alike abounding. How as well can this be done as to send us one hundred good practical farmers, you paying them wages and we finding them board; and thus showing to the world that, while you decline to enlist to use carnal weapons, even to deliver the poor slaves out of the jaws of Satan, you are ready to enlist in the service of God as the doors open and the famishing cry 'Come, come over and help us,' with a generosity

and readiness that shall satisfy the world that your scruples are not of the pecuniary type."

We thankfully acknowledge the zealous and active coöperation of other organizations, both in our religious Society and out of it. The importance of the work increases, in our estimation, as we become more acquainted with it; and the Committee feel it their duty to encourage Friends everywhere to an open ear to the cry of poverty and distress, and an increase of effort to mitigate and relieve it.

On behalf of the Committee,

EDWARD TATUM,

*Secretary.*

# Treasurer's Report.

Dr.

Cr.

To Balance from last year.....	\$2,357 70	By Cash paid for Dry-Goods and Clothing.....	\$15,457 73
" Cash from Quarterly Meetings.....	9,792 34	" " " Boots, Shoes, and Leather.....	1,908 71
" " New England Yearly Meeting.....	640 25	" " " Salaries of Agents and Expenses.....	752 40
" " London Yearly Meeting, £710 0s. 0d., realiz- ing.....	5,163 09	" " " Freights, Postage, and Stationery.....	361 13
" " New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Unknown..	32 00	" " " Agricultural Tools.....	56 00
" " Sales of Dry-Goods by our Agents.....	3,128 98		
			<hr/>
			18,535 97
		Balance on hand.....	2,578 39
			<hr/>
	\$21,114 36		\$21,114 36

HENRY DICKINSON, *Treasurer.*

NEW YORK, 5 Mo. 23d, 1864.

This balance of Cash on hand will be largely reduced in a few days by payment for goods now needed in Virginia.

Besides the Subscriptions reported above as passing directly through the Committee, it appears, by report to the Yearly Meeting, there has been, in the various Quarters, the further sum of \$4,561 10 dispensed by them through other channels, or used in purchasing and making up clothing.